

Last week, the world saw an act of senseless violence occur in Benghazi, Libya, as the U.S. consulate was attacked and four of our fellow citizens were slain, including Ambassador Chris Stevens. These men were exemplary Americans, striving to improve a world split by hate. Though their deaths were premature, I know that they made a mark on this world and that their legacies will remain. My thoughts and prayers are with these individuals' families and loved ones during this dark time. I also hope that we can keep in mind all of our dedicated public servants bravely serving this nation around the world, fully knowing the dangers of their professions and yet still choosing to make that sacrifice in order to protect our freedoms.

In Washington on Thursday, the House passed a bill to fund the federal government through the end of March. This six month spending bill essentially punts important spending decisions past a lame-duck session of Congress and into next year, while failing to address the looming cuts to our national defense approaching in January. I simply could not support a temporary spending bill that doesn't find a way to prevent our nation from hurtling over a fiscal cliff when these cuts set in and increases spending, so I voted against this "continuing resolution."

While I understand the importance of getting a spending bill passed before a lame-duck session, I believe that there is still plenty of time to prevent sequestration in a responsible way. Just as at the beginning of August, I believe Congress should stay in Washington until its job is done. I am absolutely disgusted that our nation's leaders have chosen yet again to simply ignore the tough situations facing our country and rely on temporary band-aids to push the problem down the road. For too long, Congress has been employing temporary measures to fund the federal government. This is simply not a sustainable form of governing. American families and businesses don't do this when facing budgetary constraints and dangerous fiscal trajectories; the federal government shouldn't either.

This all comes back to the broader topic of how Congress should govern. I believe it is critical for our budgetary process to return to regular order, with responsible budget resolutions and appropriations bills being considered, amended, and passed in both chambers. Unfortunately, the process of funding the government over the last few years has been anything but serious, with the Senate not passing a budget since 2009 and the government continually running on temporary stop-gap measures. These are not serious attempts at having a realistic discussion about the fiscal constraints facing our nation, which is why I did not support the continuing resolution in the House on Thursday. Temporary spending bills represent quintessential Washington behavior, punting on important decisions and letting the status quo continue to drive our nation off a fiscal cliff. Our nation's leaders were elected to make decisions; it is a shame that yet again, they have failed to address the tough ones.

I will continue to call for Congress to stay in Washington until its job is done. We must prevent the disastrous cuts to our national defense capabilities, and we must return to a regular budgetary process in order to provide certainty and transparency to our citizens. Please keep in touch and share your thoughts and ideas with me. I can be reached via telephone at (202) 225-4261, on my website (www.wittman.house.gov), through Facebook (www.facebook.com/repobwittman), or on Twitter (www.twitter.com/robwittman).

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.